

REMARKS

The applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for priority under section 119 and the notice that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

The applicants acknowledge and appreciate receiving a copy of form PTO-1449, on which the examiner has initialed all listed items.

Claims 1-81 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 23, 45 and 59 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer; claims 3-6, 9, 12-22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 34-36, 39, 41, 46-47, 56 and 60 have been amended; and new claims 61-81 have been added to further define the invention and to reduce multiple dependencies. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action Summary indicates that the specification is objected to by the examiner. However, the office action does not explain the basis for the objection. Therefore, applicants respectfully request that the examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection thereto.

Claims 4-5 were objected to for specified informalities, and claims 20, 23-39, 47, 51, and 56 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Accordingly, the claims have been amended to correct the deficiencies and indefiniteness identified in the Office Action. The examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection thereto and rejections thereof.

Dependent claims 21-22 and 45-46 were objected to, but indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Independent claims 21 and 22 have been amended to include independent claim 2 therein, and claim 2 is canceled; independent claims 3 and 4 have been amended to include allowable claim 23 therein and claim 23 is canceled; dependent claims 24,

26, 28, 34-36 and 39 have been amended to depend from claim 4 (allowable as re-written); independent claim 41 has been re-written to incorporate allowable dependent claim 45 and claim 45 canceled; and claim 46 has been amended to depend from claim 41. Allowable claims 51, 53, 55 and 56 have been re-written, including base claims, as new independent claims 61-64, respectively. Multiply dependent claims 5-20 and 60 have been re-written to reduce multiple dependencies, as new claims 65- 81. The remaining claims, i.e., claims 1, 2, 23, 45, 59, are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

It is respectfully submitted that these claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance.

Applicants wish to clarify for the record, if necessary, that the claims have been amended to expedite prosecution. Applicants do not concede that other features in the claims are found in the prior art. Moreover, applicants reserve the right to pursue the original subject matter recited in the present claims in a continuation application.

Claims 1-3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 40 and 59 were rejected under 35 USC 102(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,002,847, Silverbrook. Claims 6, 7, 8, 9, 11-13, 15-20, 41, 43, 44, 48-50, 52, 54, 57, 58 and 60 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of Silverbrook, U.S. Patent No. 3,997,912, Zsagar, U.S. Patent No. 6,058,211, Bormens, U.S. Patent No. 5,937,099, Takaoka, U.S. Patent No. 6,244,514, U.S. Patent No. 5,974,172, Chen, U.S. Patent No. 6,668,021, Shimizu et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,850, 261, Kondo et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,088,395, Wang et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,212,742, Normile et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,244,514, Otto, U.S. Patent No. 6,014,133, Yamakado et al. and/or U.S. Patent No. 5,926,563, Yamazaki. In view of the indicated allowability of the claims as amended, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections under 35 USC 102(a) and 103(a) are moot. Withdrawal of the rejections is earnestly solicited.

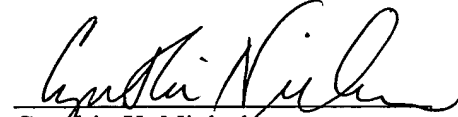
Serial No. 09/827,179

Applicants draw the examiner's attention to the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed April 22, 2004. The references listed therein were first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office not more than three months prior to the filing thereof. Applicants respectfully request the examiner to initial and return the Form 1449 attached thereto.

In view of the forgoing, the applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Please charge any unforeseen fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,


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